

# Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus

By Clara H. Stein

Hollister was sitting in his club room on the afternoon before Christmas leisurely looking out of the windows at the crowd of Christmas shoppers, who had put off their gift-buying until it could no longer be postponed, and who were now hurrying by the scores through the parks, either homeward or down town bound. Plainly Hollister's sympathies were not flattered with the Christmas shoppers. That could easily be detected in the manner in which he surveyed them.

The truth of the matter was that to him the great excitement incident to the holiday seemed all nonsense and he was very glad that he was not one of the men who on every hand were laden with toys and playthings for their little ones at home. "The crying brats," thought Hollister, "they were not worth so much fuss and worry."

Then the loneliness of his surroundings oppressed Hollister for the club-rooms were entirely deserted. For weeks he had heard the club fellows talking about what they intended doing Christmas, or where they intended going. All save he, seemed to have been invited some place.

Hollister almost wished that he had remained down in his dingy office outlining the work of some client.

He heard the door open, footsteps in the rooms, and turning about he saw John Webster, who with overcoat pockets bulging with packages and with beaming countenance cheerily exclaimed: "Why, hello, there Holly. What on earth are you mooning around here on Christmas eve, for, I thought I'd find you here. Better come home with me, old man."

"Much obliged, Web," responded Hollister, "but really I don't see how I can—frantically busy—you see—down at the office—I—"

"Let the office go," interrupted Webster, "why, man, you don't always want to work; leastways not on Christmas eve. That's not the way."

Hollister vouchsafed some more excuses. Not that he feared that he would not enjoy himself with Webster, for John Webster, was in Hollister's estimation, one of the best fellows in the club. But he feared that to visit a man's house, where there was a pretty wife and three children who adored that man, would make him quite too lonely.

Still it felt good to be invited somewhere and for this Hollister thanked John Webster, when he shortly, reluctantly took his leave.

It had now grown darker. The snow was falling faster, so that the passersby were but faintly discernable.

Hollister turned to the fire which snapped and crackled into the grate, and gazed abstractedly into the fire-place. The flames were making repeated attacks upon a knotty hickory log, and flaming up at times in their renewed effort, filled the room with a faint flickering light, by which the features of Hollister were discernible—a broad, intellectual forehead, a fine nose and square firm jaws. It was no unkind face. It was a good face, only marred by deep lines of disappointment, while a certain sadness tempered each feature.

The gay voices and merry laughter of the happy Christmas crowds penetrated the walls and struck on the ears of the lonesome man.

"This is no place to stay," he exclaimed aloud, and suiting the action to the word he summoned the valet and was soon mingling with the merry Christmas shoppers in the busy streets. The "Merry Christmases" gained Hollister as did also the bundles which each passerby carried.

Still, all of them, Hollister observed looked happy as they jostled and crowded each other in their efforts to pilot home safely those mysterious shaped bundles. What joy was there even depicted on the begrimed faces of the little bootblacks, busily plying their trade and delighting in the liberal remembrances from their patrons. How was it, that he alone, should be destitute of that Christmas cheer?

He entered the little down-street restaurant, where he was accustomed to eat. His seat at a table near the window still brought the Christmas shoppers directly in his view. He glanced over the menu card and after undue deliberation ordered his evening meal.

Hollister glanced into the street. There were two street urchins gazing hungrily into the warmly-lighted restaurant. The younger had his tiny nose pressed tightly against the window pane. His eyes were large and brown and his pale little face wore a distinctly hungry, half-starved expression. That was plainly no happy Christmas face, thought Hollister, but even then he saw a sprig of holly, bravely pinned on the shabby little jacket. Even this waif wore an emblem of Christmas cheer. The little fellow's companion was a tall lad.

From his table Hollister could plainly hear their conversation. "See that guy sittin' there all alone," said the tall one.

"Yes, I'd like to be him, wouldn't you, Sam?" responded the little fellow.

"You bet yer. Say what would you ordered if you was him."

"I'd order chicken but anything ud do, Sam, I'm arful hungry, hain't you?"

"Here's his supper."

"What 'ud you do, Sam, if you had the money that guy must have to order such a supper?"

"What'd I do? Why, I'd buy a revolver, to scare the other fellers with, so's to make 'em keep off my beat."

"Gee, but dat supper must taste good. I wonder if I'll ever have a supper like that, with chicken—just look, Sam."

The boys' conversation disturbed Hollister and he had about decided to order the waiter to send them away, when he overheard the little one's wistful voice.

"Say, do you s'pose I'll ever get anything from old Santa. This yere holly stands for Christmas, they say, and I'm wearin' it so's he'll know that I'd like to keep Christmas along with the rest of 'em. Say, Sam, I like that guy there. I wish he 'ud be Santa Claus."

"He'd be Santa Claus." The remark greatly astonished Hollister. The thought immediately suggested itself, "Why couldn't he be Santa Claus to these little street waifs, so they could both 'keep Christmas like the rest of them."

The thought took a firm hold and glancing furtively at the little wistful face pressed tightly against the glass, he rose from the table and his unfinished meal, donned his hat and hurriedly left the restaurant.

"Here comes dat guy," called out Sam to his little companion, as he espied Hollister, "he's after you and me for rubbin' in' at him, better make lively, kid," and away went both the lads with Hollister in close pursuit.

When Hollister had any purpose in view, he never gave up until he succeeded in it. He called to the boys, but they did not heed him. Suddenly the older lad darted down an alley. Hollister paused in fear, lest the little fellow should follow him. If he did, there was not much hope of Hollister's success, for the intricacies of those alleys were quite beyond him. Luckily, however, the little chap kept on in a straight course, ever and anon casting a frightened look backward. People hurrying to the theaters and churches, looked at him in astonishment as he hurried past. Once, he even encountered some of his club-fellows in a party of theater-goers. Pulling his hat down lower he still pursued the little lad.

The pavement was beginning to become very icy and it was with difficulty that Hollister kept his footing. He was about to pronounce the pursuit all in vain, when suddenly he saw the little form before him totter for a moment, and then fall on his glary sidewalk. In a moment Hollister had reached the side of the little lad, who, unconscious from the pain of a broken limb was lying there in a forlorn little heap. He tenderly picked him up in his strong arms and hurried with his burden to the nearest corner. A moment more he had called a cab and he and the little waif were being hurried to the children's hospital.

The moans of the little fellow made Hollister's heart ache, as did also the sight of the little spray of holly, when in the flash of lights at the street corners, he saw it still lovingly pressed against the threadbare jacket.

Hollister was well known at the hospital. There was a time—several years ago, when he had endowed the institution very heavily.

The house-physician and the nurse soon had the poor little injured lad in a room all by himself, as Hollister had wished it, and they bandaged the broken limb and made him as comfortable as it was possible for them to make him.

Hollister remained with the child. He was sleeping now. Utter exhaustion the nurse had pronounced it.

"Poor little fellow," thought Hollister, "he is scarcely more than a baby." How pale he looked and how wan and wasted the little features were. Here surely was someone for him to care for, he felt confident that the little chap would not resent it, for had he not wanted him, Hollister, of all people, to be his Santa Claus. Hollister had never quite so thoroughly enjoyed himself as sitting there in the dim light, he surveyed his new treasure. The sprig of holly was pinned on the little chap's white nightdress. Hollister had put it there himself—for was not that the sign of a Christmas child—as the youngster had said.

Hollister told the nurse he would watch in the room—somehow he wanted to be alone with the little one. The nurse had gone, saying that at 9 o'clock she would send up some relief.

Next door, in the church, they were holding a Christmas carol service, and now the strains of a joyous Christmas carol awakened in Hollister all sorts of old memories. That was the carol his mother had taught him, when he was a youngster. When a boy, he had sung it, standing beside his father and mother in the pew of the old country church on a Christmas morning. It did not seem possi-

ble to him that he was an orphan, now, for somehow the old folks seemed so near to him tonight.

Then he remembered Helen Roscoe, and the days when children together, they had sung that carol at the Christmas celebration at the Sunday school. Later, when he, a student away at college, had returned home for the Christmas holidays, Helen and he had sung it on Christmas eve, in the old Roscoe home. More memories came thick and fast. He thought of the years when he was striving to make a career for himself. For a time he had neglected the old home—he had known nothing save his ambition.

He thought that Helen would understand that he was laboring for her, and that, that alone, was the cause of his neglect. Finally with his reputation established, he had returned to the old home, only to find that old Thomas Roscoe, had become heavily involved in debt, had been obliged to sell the old home and had moved into the city so the neighbors said. Helen they added, was at this time the affianced wife of Robert Ruggles, and that by this time she had no doubt been married several years.

Soon after this his parents had died and Hollister went back to the metropolis with a stern look deeply worn into his handsome countenance and with the determination to make ambition his all. He had seen the reputation of being one of the best practitioners at the state bar. Nor had he accomplished this by unfair methods; for all who knew him; knew him as a just and upright man.

The entrance of the nurse at nine o'clock broke the spell and brought him to his feet. He gazed at the woman, at the golden-brown hair, the even aristocratic features. Could he be mistaken in the identity. He started forward.

"What are you doing here, Helen?" "Tom, oh, Tom, is it really you. Who is that little chap, I thought he was a street waif. What brought you here?"

"Homesickness," he answered.

"What do you mean," she asked.

"I mean I desire to care for someone, someone to make happy, as nearly everyone has a chance to do at Christmas time. And then he told me the Christmas shoppers had oppressed him, and how even the little chap had annoyed him until his better self arose in him and he wanted to be the youngster's Santa Claus. He stopped abruptly. Then he laughed the hollow mockery of a laugh.

"We will not talk of it more," she said quietly. "You have not asked me where I have been all these years."

"I know. I heard. You married."

"No, I did not marry. I do not think I shall ever marry." She saw him lean forward with a quick start.

"I thought—why, I heard—Bob—" stammered Hollister incoherently.

"I liked him," she went on frankly. "You never came home to see us that entire year, and when father failed and we moved away, and he went at the same time—well, the neighbors thought—you know—"

"But what brought you here," inquired Hollister.

"After father failed. I studied nursing. Then when he died, and mother also, soon after, I came here. I love children and so you see the work is pleasant."

The little chap stirred restlessly in his sleep. Hollister moved to Helen's side at the bedside. "I'm going to care for him, Helen he quietly said. "You see the holly. That was to serve as a sign, he said, so that Santa would recognize him. He really wanted me to be his Santa Claus. Helen, do you think I'll suffice for a Santa Claus. I am kindhmmmmmm Santa Claus. Am I kind enough."

"Oh, yes," the girl responded, "no one in the whole world could be kind to him as you—"

The sentence rang in his ears. In it the man thought he could detect a wealth of love for him. He took both her hands in his, and looked down into her eyes, and what he saw there, remained forever a burning part of his life.

Unnoticed by the two, the little chap on the bed, awoke and was now gazing bewilderingly at the cheerful room and at the man whom he had selected as his Santa Claus. "It's really old Santa, sure enough, only I didn't think he was so young," thought the forlorn little waif, and then he exclaimed aloud, "Gee, it must be Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus."

Hollister started then as he grasped the meaning of the exclamation. He still held the girl's hands. "Shall it be, Helen, you and I, a Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus."

Not even the little chap heard her answer. Even Hollister, himself, did not know if he answered at all—but the love-light in her eyes was enough. Hollister understood.

"The more the merrier" doesn't fit well when applied to war.

War, it is observed, is becoming more and more a shell game.

Genuine civilization is not the kind women and children have reason to fear.

Nobody objects to "broken English" when it voices solid American sentiment.

Sometimes the man who likes peace most fights hardest when war comes.



## SANTA CLAUS' LETTER

Afar off in the Northland, in very quaint attire, Old Santa Claus sat toasting his shins before the fire.

Within his hand a letter brought by the morning mail.

Whose writer claimed an answer at Christmas "without fail."

Old Santa spread the letter upon his round, fat knee.

Then fumbled for his glasses and mused. "Now let me see!"

What is't the youngster wishes,—my pack is brimming o'er,

It will not do to load it with many presents more.

"Dear Santa Claus,—'that's pleasant, I'm glad he calls me 'dear,' 'I'd like to have you bring me a nice kodak, this year.'"

Now what is that, I wonder?" he pondered, with a grin.

"If I could find the creature, I'd surely tuck it in."

"A sled and skates, I've got 'em," he chuckled;—"what is this?—"

"Another thing to pester my poor old brain, I wis;—"

A book of Gibson pictures—parcheesal board—oh dear!

The children grow exacting—much more so, every year.

The Jungle Book by Kipling,—strange how these youngsters know

The best things in the market;—and then he laughed, "Ho! ho!"

A kindly twinkle glimmered in dear Old Santa's eye;

"It's Christmas only once a year; to find them I must try."

Then out into the snow-storm, through drifts above his knees,

He plunged and when at nightfall he sat again at ease,

His pack contained a kodak, a Jungle Book or two,

Parcheesal, Gibson pictures: he puffed, "I think 'twill do."

And then besides his treasures he quickly took his seat,

And soon was speeding toward him his reindeer fleet.

O'er hill-top and through valley with jingling bells they sped,

Till ears and nose were tingling and cheeks were rosy red.

"How fortunate," he pondered "that letter was not late,

Else had my pack of presents been somewhat out of date."—Epitome.

Tom's Christmas Present. My brother Tom is in the sulks, Although it's Christmas day, And I don't blame him very much Because he feels that way.

Our Aunt Matilda thinks that Tom is still a little boy, And every year she sends him what He calls a "baby toy."

Last Christmas 'twas a lot of beasts—A fine menagerie Tom didn't care for those at all He gave them all to me.

Something came yesterday by freight, All boxed and nailed up tight. Tom thought it surely was a wheel—He scarcely slept all night.

But what d'you think he found, instead? It's not a wheel, of course. This time our Aunt Matilda sent A great big rocking-horse!

And that's why Tom's so cross today; But wouldn't it be fine If, by tomorrow, I should have That rocking-horse for mine! —Charlotte Goldsmith Chase.

"H—MI SAME OLD CHRISTMAS PRESENT!"

The Bells of Christmas-Tide. The Magi saw His sacred star, In beauty undefiled, And brought their precious gifts to greet

The birthday of the Child. So, in this wondrous day of days, In deathless love imperiled, Hark! to the bells of Christmas-tide That ring around the world!

The holly-leaves and mistletoe, Where summer seems to cling, Whisper, through arctic distances, Of God's eternal spring.

So, on this wondrous day of days, In deathless love imperiled, Hark! to the bells of Christmas-tide That ring around the world! —William Hamilton Haynes.

## WHERE MEN STEAL THEIR WIVES

In the early civilization of every people there has existed in one form or another the curious custom of securing a wife by stealing her.

Without doubt it is the cave man's methods persisting among the semi-civilized, and even our custom of elopement can be traced back to the knobbed-club days. So it is in darkest Africa today.

Where a wife is not a chattel possession, precisely as much the man's property as his cattle and his farm, the African maiden is wooed and won by her dusky lover by stealth.

Often her parents favor some richer suitor, and have hunted the lover away from their doorstep, and then it is that the marriage by theft is sure to occur.

Watching her house, as a cat watches a mouse hole, the love-sick swain follows the girl of his heart when she leaves the house to draw water or gather wood for the fire, and out of sight of the house he woos her with soft words.

If she is willing, he tells her he will send some of his friends to steal her away—"pula" it is called—and bring her to his house.

Then he calls on half a dozen of his friends and bids them steal the maiden of his heart for him.

At the appointed time the girl goes down to the spring alone, her lover's friends creep up on her, and should she in modesty struggle, they life her on their shoulders and run with her to her new home.

There she remains until the next morning, when her relatives come and demand six goats as a trespass offering for having carried her away. In addition to these the regular dowry is twenty goats and five head of cattle.

Each goat is given in payment for some definite item of the marriage bill.

For instance, one goat on account of the betrothal, one as a fine for the covetous eyes that spied the girl out, two—one for each parent—for the stool on which he sat when he wooed her, two for the relative's trouble in looking for her when kidnapped, two on account of the talk or "palaver," and two for entering the house or grounds to make love to the girl.

Of course the relatives make the "bill" as long as they can string it out.

It is very seldom, indeed, when a marriage does not ensue as a direct result of the "pula," but sometimes the angry parents carry her back home again. In either event the African marriage is one that is not binding forever unless both the husband and wife are pleased. Indeed, like the modern advertising slogan, "all goods not approved may be exchanged," the dusky lover may return his stolen bride after a few months, if he finds that he has made a mistake and really doesn't like her.

AIDS INVALIDS TO WALK.

Vehicle Helps Victims of Paralysis To Get Around.

In the treatment of many invalids it is necessary to re-attach them to walk. This is notably in the cases of broken limbs, paralysis, locomotor ataxia and other similar maladies.

A device to aid the patient in learning to walk again has been devised and is in successful use in a Michigan sanitarium. It is called the walking chair, and by making use of the vehicle, the patient may first learn to use his feet while in a sitting posture. Later, when his strength is equal to the task, he can stand, supporting himself on the bars of the carriage. The wheels are rubber-tired and the whole carriage is very light, though strong, offering practically no resistance to the motive power furnished by the invalid.

The walking chair is especially valuable in the treatment of improving cases of locomotor ataxia, in which disease it is very difficult for the patient to recover the use of his limbs without an artificial support of some kind. This machine is used so frequently in cases of this kind that it is sometimes referred to as the "locomotor ataxicab."—World's Advance.

WHY TURN TO THE RIGHT?

First Law on This Point Was Passed by Maryland.

Now that many automobile manufacturers are constructing their cars with the driver's seat on the left, interest is naturally aroused in the question as to why vehicles keep to the right in some countries and to the left in others, and as to where our laws to this effect originated.

The Massachusetts Mercury, published in Boston, in its issue of Friday, April 11, 1800, gives the following item among its general news:

"A law has been made in Baltimore that the driver of a vehicle with wheels, in passing another in any street, shall keep to the right-hand side, under penalty of \$3 for each offense. And likewise a law granting a considerable bounty on the use of broad wheels."

From the wording of the item and the prominence given to it, it seems to have been the first law in the country.

This would be a delightful old world to sojourn in where it is not for the fact that too many people are always trying their best to do their worst.

Religion is a good thing that never cuts a wide swath in a horse trade.

## ELECTRIC SEWING DEVICE

Motor Built into Machine is Newest In This Line.

One of the latest developments in electric sewing machines is one in which the motor is built into the machine and its speed is controlled entirely by a brake working on a drum mounted on the motor shaft. This brake is operated by the pedal. So long as there is no pressure on the pedal the brake prevents the motor from working, even with the current turned on.

A slight pressure starts the machine slowly and when the pedal is pushed down as far as it will go, the machine is run at full speed. An additional advantage in this machine is that the needle is placed squarely in front on the operator, eliminating the strained attitude required in running an ordinary machine.

Current is supplied through a cord that can be attached to any electric light socket. In case of failure of electric power, the machine is made ready for operation by foot by disconnecting the motor belt and connecting a belt operated by the pedal.—Popular Mechanics.

Gifts for Girls.

In choosing Christmas gifts, remember, too, that to some friends comfort means a great deal. One woman last year rejoiced exceedingly in a wadded silk morning jacket which Santa Claus brought her. A kimono is also a delight to many persons, and bed-room slippers, of the warm fur-lined sort, make the name of the donor blessed every cold morning. It is safe in choosing for girls, from their early teens on, to supply some superfluous article of dress—silk stockings, a modish belt-buckle, gloves at any and all times, some late hand-some novelty in neck-wear, and to any party-going girl a bag for her fan and slippers, a dainty fan itself, a big square of the soft flimsy stuff, liberty silk or Japanese gauze, that winds so becomingly around the throat under the evening cloak, and is useful in a draughty ball-room, or a pair of carriage slippers.—Harper's Bazaar.

Dame Fortune is a stranger to the majority of people, but her daughter, Miss Fortune, calls on them daily.

My son, there are two things you should never borrow—money or trouble, especially trouble.

If a young man's cake is "dough," he can easily find a girl who is willing to take the cake.

THOROUGH WORK

How You Can Find Freedom From Kidney Trouble.

If you suffer from backache—From urinary disorders—Any curable disease of the kidneys. Use a tested kidney remedy.

Doan's Kidney Pills have been tested by thousands. Grateful people testify.

Can you ask more convincing proof of merit.

S. H. Bixler, farmer, Swanton, O., says: "I had no end of trouble from disordered kidneys and at one time I was laid up for several months, unable to do any work. I tried various medicines and found Doan's Kidney Pills to be the best."

Price 50c, at all dealers. Don't simply ask for a kidney remedy—get Doan's Kidney Pills—the same that Mr. Bixler had. Foster-Milburn Co., Props., Buffalo, N. Y.

Folding High Chair

Fits to back of any chair—weighs less than one pound—fine for traveling carry in your pocket. Order now for Christmas.

Geo. L. Boyers, Sec'y 966 Western Ave., Toledo

\$1 Post Paid

LIBRARY PARK HOTEL

OPPOSITE HUDSON STORE Rates 75 up Noon Lunch 35c A. E. HAMILTON Detroit, Mich.

AUTOMOBILE SCHOOL

DETROIT Y. M. C. A. DAY & EVENING CLASSES For Salesmen, Chauffeurs, Mechanics and Owners. Enter any time. For Particulars, Address Y. M. C. A. Automobile School Room 203 Detroit, Mich.

NOVELS

Very Latest at Lowest Cost Send 25 cents. We will mail to your address, two novels; also list of books which we carry. Order now. Get your name on our list. These books retail regularly at 25 cents each.

Geo. L. Boyers, Sec'y 966 Western Ave., Toledo, Ohio